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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

WEDNESDAY, August 4, 1937.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "VEGETABLE NEWS FROM EXPERIMENT STATIONS." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, U.S.D.A.

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Listeners, if you want to keep up-to-date on vegetables, better keep an eye on the State experiment stations. Many new vegetable varieties are appearing every year as a result of the plant-breeding work carried on at these stations in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture. Scientists there are working continually to develop better vegetables for home gardens, for market and canning -- vegetables of improved quality that will resist diseases and insects and will thrive in the different parts of the country.

During the past year scientists at 4 stations have been concentrating on snap beans. If you have ever grown snap beans in your garden, you probably know that they suffer from various ills, particularly from mosaic diseases. Growers raising snap beans for canning have often had considerable losses in their crops because of mosaic. So the men at the experiment stations have been trying to find ways of conquering this disease. They have been trying out various treatments or control-methods, and they have also been working to develop beans that won't "take" mosaic -- or will be "mosaic resistant," as the scientists put it. New York State workers have been trying to develop such a snap bean by crossing varieties that have good canning qualities with others that are immune or resistant to the disease. So they crossed the variety most often used for canning -- the Stringless Greed Pod Refugee, which unfortunately is susceptible to mosaic, with the variety named Robust which is immune. And they reported recently that the new hybrids from this cross are immune and also have many of the desirable characteristics of the Refugee variety.

Then, Idaho and Connecticut workers together have developed a Refugee-type bean that resists mosaic. The Idaho workers say that the new variety has all the good qualities of the parent Refugee bean and ripens a week to 10 days earlier in the season and is well-adapted to growing in Idaho. The Michigan Station workers, on the other hand, report that they have some late garden snap beans that appear to resist mosaic and to have commercial possibilities.

Black-eyed beans have been taking the attention of California scientists because the Fusarium wilt disease has been causing so much damage to bean crops in that State. Last year the California workers announced that they had developed a new resistant variety of black-eyed bean. They named it Calva and are distributing it to California bean growers.

Several stations have reported interesting news about new sweet corn varieties lately. New York State workers have been trying out and comparing different varieties and they report that a Golden Cross Bantam, developed by Indiana and Department of Agriculture scientists has proved superior to every other in quality, yield, attractiveness, and in many cases also in wilt resistance.

Texas workers have been working to find new varieties of corn adapted to growing in the Southwest and report that the varieties called Honey June and Surcropper Sugar are proving very successful over a wide area. Honey June also seems to be moderately resistant to the earworm. As you know, the earworm's appetite for corn on the cob spoils many a fine roasting ear for human beings. So the scientists have been considering the earworm as they developed new varieties -- trying to find strains that tempt people but not worms. Another new Texas variety, the Mexican June, they report highly resistant to this destructive worm.

You may be surprised to hear that scientists way down at the Puerto Rico Station have also been working on sweet corn, developing varieties that will thrive in the tropics. They shipped some of these new tropical varieties from Puerto Rico to New York and report that they sold at good prices and compared favorably in quality with corn shipped from the States.

A new squash from Africa is pleasing Florida scientists these days. They imported it and have been trying it out in the Florida environment. They find that it is good both for table use and forage, that it grows well in Florida and seems to be free from insect and disease attack.

Spinach has had a good deal of attention at the Virginia Truck Crop Station the last few years. Scientists there have been trying to develop spinach varieties that will resist mosaic. Just lately they have offered some new resistant varieties to commercial growers. The new varieties show marked resistance to mosaic and also to cold weather, so they are well adapted to planting in late autumn for the early spring crop.

Have you heard about the spineless okra that South Carolina workers recently brought out? The new okra with smooth green pods instead of the familiar spiny ones made its bow under the name of Clemson Spineless. Its plants stand 3 and a half to 4 and a half feet tall.

Another interesting bit of vegetable news comes from the Louisiana Experiment Station and concerns the color of carrots. Louisiana workers found that carrots grown on raised beds had a deeper yellow color than others. They explain that aeration of the soil seems to be important in getting good color in carrots, but that fertilizers and soil reactions have no effect on root color.

One last bit of news. The New York State Station has issued a circular on growing and using herbs, such as dill, caraway, lavender, mint, rosemary, sage and thyme.

By the way, neither the State experiment stations nor the Department of Agriculture in Washington have any seeds of these new varieties to distribute. Eventually the new vegetables that have proved themselves will be available through commercial seed firms.

That concludes the vegetable news from State experiment stations as reported to the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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